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ABSTRACT

No formal notion of markedness has been advanced for syntactic-semantic features of language. A hypothesis is presented which states that if all related features are defined as comprising sets, then it is possible to predict the occurrence of a member of a set by the absence of any other member of the set. Any lexical item subcategorized for gender will be specified, for example, as being feminine or it will carry no gender specification at all. This hypothesis is supported with evidence from Spanish (1) loan words, (2) nominalized lexical items, (3) compound verb forms, and (4) first and second plural personal pronouns. The process of neutralization characterizing gender specification is defined as two conflicting features merging into one (the unmarked) when the underlying structures predict the use of both. A logical correlation in markedness between syntax and morphology frequently exists. Morphologically unmarked elements are used in more syntactic situations than their marked counterparts. Among the situations from Spanish cited are: (1) the replacement of "le" by "se"; (2) the use of the less morphologically marked present tense syntactically to replace the imperfect, preterite, and future; and (3) the use of the (unmarked) singular form of nouns to indicate mass and abstract nouns. (JK)

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MARKEDNESS AND THE GENDER FEATURE IN SPANISH

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Noam Chomsky and Morris Halle (1968) revived and extended the Prague School notion of markedness for distinctive features in an attempt to account for a number of phenomena involving the naturalness of phonological elements. As the theory of generative grammar had been previously formulated, all phonological (or syntactic) elements had equal status. This formulation led to the inability of such a theory to form an adequate basis for the explanation of certain facts of a human language.

With this new theory each feature may be marked or unmarked. The unmarked feature represents the normal state of the feature with respect to that linguistic element. The marked form of a feature represents the non-normal state of the feature.

The notion of markedness has been discussed widely in questions of phonology, but few linguists have used it in morphology and syntax. Although no theory has yet been devised which will account for syntactic phenomena in terms of a formal notion of markedness, some progress has been made by linguists such as George Lakoff (1970) in English and by William W. Cressey (1970) in Spanish.

Phonological features seem to be tied to the physiology of the human tract, whereas syntactic features seem to be tied to our conceptual system of communication. Thus, syntactic-semantic explanations involving markedness may eventually help us to understand better the human conceptual apparatus. We feel justified in extending the notion of normal state and markedness directly from phonology, since the same sort of empirical evidence on which we base our conclusions about markedness in phonology seems to be present in syntax. For example, children seem to learn concrete nouns before they learn abstract ones, they seem to learn countable nouns before they learn uncountable ones, and so on. This would tend to make us hypothesize that [- abstract] and [+ count] are the unmarked (more natural) values of those features.

Paul Postal (1968) proposes that most morpheme-structure constraints can be handled by a universal set of marking conventions that reflects the capabilities and limitations of the speech apparatus. Jorgue M. Guitart (1976) proved that data available on the relative frequency of Castilian Spanish sounds agree in general with crosslanguage data on the greater frequency of certain elements, which in turn might be seen as supportive of the less marked status assigned these elements in current theory.

Roman Jakobson (1968) theorized that language acquisition supports the hypothesis of markedness, since children seem to learn first the most normal (unmarked) sounds and syntactic structures of a language, and evidence of this has been found in certain Spanish language acquisition studies. In general, it seems that acquisition data provide support for the assumption that phonological systems are asymmetrical. On the other hand, it does not seem that aphasia is invariably the reverse of acquisition, and examples can be found of unmarked elements disappearing first.

The term marked can be regarded as meaning ultimately more complex, either physiologically or perceptually, and its unmarked counterpart as less complex. However, it does not seem to be the case that the physiologically simpler elements are also always perceptually simpler, and vice versa. Sol Saporta (1955) supports the theory that human communication does not favor either the speaker or the hearer at all times, but actually strikes a middle ground between the two in many instances. Perhaps neither maximal contrast nor least effort in making the sounds is the main guiding principle in human communication, but rather a compromise is frequently achieved between the two. Phonologically neutralized environments are positions of maximal contrast, which may or may not demand greater physiological effort from the speaker.

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In examples of syntactic neutralization, one feature value seems to turn up again and again wherever the given phenomena occur. For example, in Spanish if a masculine noun and a feminine noun are conjoined and described with one adjective, the form of this adjective is neutralized in the masculine form; this leads us to hypothesize that such a value is the unmarked one.

If all related features are defined as comprising sets, then it is possible to predict the occurrence of a member of a set by the absence of any other member of the set. Any lexical item subcategorized for gender will be specified, for example, as being feminine or it will carry no gender specification at all. In other words, any noun unmarked for gender will be assumed to be masculine, this being predicted by a possible universal redundancy rule of markedness.

Evidence for the unmarkedness of the masculine gender versus the feminine seems to be found in various languages, specially the Romance languages, and in various areas. Let us consider the following facts in Spanish in support of our hypothesis:

(a) Loan words are always masculine in Spanish, except when they are borrowed from Romance languages in which case the gender is determined by the original language.[1] The list of loan words in modern Spanish runs probably in the thousands, specially from English; we mention just a few here:

(1)

el bar	el mitin	el fútbol	el vodka
el sánguich	el show	el closet	el picnic
el coctel	el béisbol	el bisté	el jonrón
el yaque	el fao	el suéter	el rosbif
el yipi	el toyota	el jersey	el gol

(b) Another area which shows support for markedness is found in the derivation of some feminine nouns from a masculine base. We notice in (2) below, that in the first column, the full base for the feminine formation is the masculine form, whereas in the second column, the feminine noun has two morphemes besides the base:

(2)

pastor / pastor-a	poet-a / poet-is-a
profesor / profesor-a	profet-a / profet-is-a
alemán / aleman-a	sacerdot-e / sacerdot-is-a
labrador / labrador-a	alcald-e / alcald-es-a
marqués / marques-a	héro-e / hero-ín-a
doncel / doncell-a	gall-o / gall-in-a
aquel / aquell-a	rey [réi] / rei-n-a
chaval / chaval-a	

(c) The infinitive form of a verb becomes a noun with the masculine gender, with the modifier (article, possessive, demonstrative, adjective) being the carrier of the masculine morpheme. We might expect the neuter article lo or the neuter demonstratives esto, eso, aquello to agree with the infinitive form, and yet their masculine counterparts el, este, ese, aquel are the morphemes that modify the nominal infinitive. Examples:

(3)

el deber	el cantar	el saber
el pesar	el salir	el anochecer
el atardecer	el entrar	el amanecer

A common Spanish structure is the use of the infinitive after the proposition a 'on' to indicate an action which is simultaneous with the main verb of the sentence. The preposition is followed by the masculine determiner el 'the' and the two items contract into al, as in (4):

(4) Te llamo al salir.
'I will call you upon leaving.'

(d) When we nominalize any lexical item, we do it with a masculine modifier such as

articles, possessives, etc. Actually, some interesting nouns originated in adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, exclamations, etc., and always in the masculine gender. Examples:[4]

(5) el sí el pero el sobre
el porqué el más el mañana
el menos el ayer el ay

(e) Most of the compound nouns are masculine, even in instances where they contain a verbal or prepositional root followed by a feminine noun. Here are some examples:[3]

(6) el cuentagotas el pisapapeles
el montacargas el cortaplumas
el paraguas el paracaídas
el quehacer el sinfín
el tocadiscos el salvavidas

(f) A few adjectives are unspecified, i.e., unmarked when they precede a masculine noun. Examples:[4]

(7) un (uno) mal (malo)
algún (alguno) tercer (tercero)
ningún (ninguno) postrer (postrero)
primer (primero) san (santo)
buen (bueno)

(g) Both the augmentative and diminutive forms of nouns and adjectives have one unspecified form for the masculine, while the feminine has one more morpheme, and therefore is more specified:

(8) pequeñ-ín / pequeñ-in-a grand-ón / grand-on-a
menud-ín / menud-in-a trist-ón / trist-on-a
saltar-ín / saltar-in-a trag-ón / trag-on-a
Pep-ín / Josef-in-a hombr-ón / mujer-on-a

(h) There are many feminine nouns whose augmentative form is masculine rather than feminine, which shows an interesting case of morphological neutralization:[5]

(9) la calleja / el callejón la sala / el salón
la botella / el botellón la tapa / el tapón
la cuchara / el cucharón la guía / el guión
la butaca / el butacón la bala / el balón
la silla / el sillón la rata / el ratón

(i) The masculine determiners el and un replace their feminine counterparts la and una respectively whenever a noun begins with a stressed a, such as el agua 'the water' [elá(w)a] rather *la agua, un hacha [uńča] 'an ax' rather than *una hacha.

(j) The historical switch from feminine to masculine gender of the nouns ending in /e/ and /r/ seems to favor the unmarkedness of the masculine gender. In modern Spanish there are about 2098 (89.2%) nouns ending in /e/ versus 255 (5.3%) feminine and 265 ambivalents (5.5%). There are 1873 masculine nouns (99.2%) ending in /r/ versus 15 feminine (.5%) and 12 ambivalents (.3%).[6] Examples: el puente 'the bridge', el mar 'the sea', el color 'the color', el vientre 'the belly'.

(k) The only way to predict the gender of nouns in Spanish, apart from the few words relating to males (masculine) and females (feminine), is the final letter of the noun. Feminine nouns are the ones ending in a, d, z, ción and is, while the masculine gender will take the rest of the letters in the alphabet: b, c, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, (except ción), o, p, r, t (except is), u, x, y. We realize that some of these letters are not typically final word sounds in Spanish except in borrowings, but still the number of letters for masculine gender is considerably higher than the number for feminine.[7]

(l) The nominalization of adjectives takes the masculine form of the adjective preceded by the neuter article lo. Examples: lo buen-o 'the good part', lo fe-o 'the ugly part', etc.[8]

(m) The compound forms of the verbs take the masculine form of the perfective participle rather than the feminine, as can be seen in (10):

(10) María ha comprad-o una casa.
'Mary has bought a house.'

And yet, this participle used to agree in old Spanish with the direct object of the sentence for transitive verbs, and with the subject for intransitive verbs, as can be seen in this example from the Poema del Cid (1240, p. 153):

(11) Las puertas abiertas an dexadas
'They have left the doors open.'

(n) The personal pronouns nosotros 'we' and vosotros 'you all' are used to replace not only two (or more) conjoined masculine nouns, but also to replace a masculine and a feminine NP (noun phrase) such as María y yo 'Mary and I'. In some Spanish dialects the masculine forms nosotros and vosotros are used to replace two feminine NP's such as María y yo, where yo 'I' would stand for a female speaker, and therefore the NP is feminine.

As we have seen in many facts of Spanish, the masculine gender prevails over the feminine. We have mentioned several cases of conjoining and neutralization, and this is very important to support the theory of markedness in grammar. By neutralization we mean that two conflicting features, such as masculine/feminine, merge into one of the two features when the underlying structures would predict the use of both features. This neutralization can be purely morphological, i.e., affecting only the surface form, but it can be also semantic, when one feature covers two apparently opposite specifications. William Cressey (1970) talks about another kind of neutralization which he calls morphological-semantic which results when a contrast disappears; for example, the aspect perfective (preterite) versus non-perfective (imperfect) in the Spanish verb. This contrast disappears in the subjunctive mood where one form (imperfect) does not show such a contrast.

Both morphological and semantic neutralizations occur usually when two NP's are conjoined. In (12) we have an example of morphological conjuncts:

(12) La casa y el patio son amplios.
'The house and the yard are spacious.'

where the adjective amplios is masculine, although one of the conjoined NP's is feminine, la casa. Family related words neutralize in the masculine plural form carrying both semantic features, "male and female." Here the neutralization is semantic, since the feature gender is not simply morphological when it applies to familial words, but also semantic. A word like tíos 'uncle(s) and aunt(s),' carries a double semantic feature as it can be seen by the English gloss. Notice the difference between the two following columns of words:

(13)	padre	'father'	padres	'parents'
	hermano	'brother'	hermanos	'brothers & sisters'
	abuelo	'grandfather'	abuelos	'grandparents'
	hijo	'son'	hijos	'children'

If it can be shown that neutralization of this sort is always toward the unmarked state of the feature, then the notion of neutralization may be universally characterized. That is, given markedness, the direction of neutralization can always be predicted as being toward the unmarked state. If both the noun and the adjective are assumed to be masculine as the normal state, there is no need for an agreement rule with two genders: one rule with the feminine will be sufficient as shown in (14):

(14) Gender Agreement Rule:

$$\begin{matrix} N \\ [-masc] \end{matrix} + Adj \longrightarrow \begin{matrix} Adj \\ [-masc] \end{matrix}$$

This rule resembles an assimilation rule in phonology, and it simply says that the adjective takes the gender feature inherent in the noun. On the other hand, gender agreement of modifiers and nouns is based only on the principle of matching referent differentiators, to use William Bull's (1965) expression. In other words, blando 'soft' has the same semantic features of blanda 'soft' as can be seen by the same gloss in English. Therefore, the gender morpheme in modifiers is no different than a phoneme in phonology since its function is to differentiate other words, the nouns.

The concept of markedness is different according to the component of the grammar as was mentioned briefly at the beginning of this paper. And yet, the basic idea introduced by Trubetzkoy and Jakobson in the early 30's is the same for all linguistic elements:

(a) In phonology a feature is marked when it represents the non-normal state of that feature with respect to an element. The unmarked form of a feature is the normal state, i.e., presumably the sound is easier to make or to hear in respect to that feature. The marked values that occur in phonetically neutralized environments are marked only physiologically.

(b) In morphology a form is marked when it has more morphemes than its counterpart. For example, the plural is marked in Spanish because it has one morpheme more (spelled s or es) than the singular, which will be unmarked. The direct object of a sentence is generally unmarked by any preposition, whereas the indirect object is always marked by the preposition a 'to'. The morphologically-marked form is also called specified, and the unmarked form, unspecified.

(c) In syntax a form is marked when compared with another if it is used in a smaller number of situations, whereas the unmarked form is used more widely, as if it were more normal. For example the masculine form of a noun and adjective is used more frequently than its feminine counterpart as was seen earlier in the paper. In the verb system, the present form covers more temporal situations than the imperfect tense or the future tense.

As William Cressey (1971) suggests in his theory about the tenses in Spanish, there is frequently a logical correlation between morphology and syntax in markedness. We would expect an element which is morphologically unmarked (or less specified) to be used in syntax in more situations than its marked (specified) counterpart. We have enough evidence in Spanish to prove this assumption:

(1) The singular form of nouns is unspecified since there is no morpheme at all to mark it. Syntactically the singular noun is used more widely than the plural form as in

(15) El hombre es mortal.
'Man is mortal.'

There is no doubt that the meaning is plural although the form is singular. Furthermore "mass" nouns are used only in the singular form such as leche 'milk', arena 'sand', agua 'water', etc., and so are abstract nouns such as prudencia 'prudence', fe 'faith', etc.[9]

(2) The present tense, when compared with other tenses forms of the indicative, is less specified morphologically, as can be seen in (16):

(16)

Present	Imperfect	Preterite	Future
habl-a-n	habl-a-ba-n	habl-a-ro-n	habl-a-rá-n

Syntactically, the present forms could be used (with certain restrictions) to replace the imperfect, the preterite and especially the future.

(3) We have mentioned that the masculine form of nouns and adjectives is unspecified,

at least partially, as it was shown in (b), (f), (g) and (h) above. At the same time the masculine form can carry not only a masculine referent but also a feminine referent as shown in (14).

(4) In the clitic pronoun system, the form se 'him, her, them, you' is morphologically less specified than le since it is both singular and plural, while le has les as plural form. Syntactically le is only indirect object (and direct object in peninsular Spanish to replace masculine personal nouns), while se is not only indirect object, but also reflexive pronoun, replacing any noun in both direct and indirect object functions.

The value specified or unspecified refers only to surface morphological representation of a form. Given a correlation between markedness in syntax and specification of morphemes, it appears that masculine is less specified and therefore unmarked in syntax, this being precisely the conclusion we were led to on syntactic grounds exclusively. If masculine is the unmarked feature for Spanish gender in nouns and adjectives, we may say that masculine has a higher rank than the feminine, grammatically speaking. If we consider a sentence like the following

(17) El chico y la chica son americanos.
'The boy and the girl are Americans.'

we notice a neutralization, i.e. a feature raising, since the dominating NP contains two opposite features, masculine/feminine. Since the predicate adjectives agree with the dominating NP, the feature masculine has to outrank the feature feminine in order for correct agreement to occur.

In dealing with gender, ranking accounts for neutralization into masculine, and markedness for the fact that some nominal and adjectival forms are unspecified in masculine, and also for the fact that most loan words are masculine. In gender the highest ranking feature and the feature unmarked for gender are the same. This seems to be the case for paired sets of features in all the languages.

Now let us examine in detail the feature gender in the clitic pronoun system of Spanish. The first and second person clitics me, te, nos and os do not show gender contrast. There are seven third person clitics: se, le-la-lo, les-las-los. There is gender contrast in the Accusative case (direct object function in deep structure) with the lo-la dichotomy in singular and los-las in plural. It is interesting to notice that in colloquial Castilian the gender opposition has totally replaced the case contrast; in other words, there is no Dative/Accusative opposition, although all other dialects of Spanish as well as all other Romance languages show this contrast. On the other hand, in colloquial Castilian the masculine clitic forms are le-les rather than lo-los as can be seen in the following sentences:

(18) a. Ver al chico: verle 'see the boy: see him'
b. ... el libro: verle ..... book ... it'
c. ... a los chicos: verles .... boys ... them'
d. ... los libros: verles ..... books .. them'

There seem to be several reasons for this shift from lo to le in the masculine form of the clitic in colloquial Castilian:[10]

(i) The fact that the clitics me-te-se end with the morpheme /-e/.
(ii) The existence of the clitics le-les for Dative case in all the Spanish dialects without gender difference.
(iii) The demonstrative modifiers est-e 'this', es-e 'that' show the morpheme /-e/ for the masculine gender.
(iv) Most of the nouns ending in /e/ show masculine gender as it was mentioned in (j) above, such as peine 'comb', traje 'suit', tatuaje 'tattoo', mensaje 'message', etc.
(v) There is need to show morphological contrast between masculine lo and neuter lo.

Actually the morpheme /-o/ in lo has a double function in all Spanish dialects except colloquial Castilian:

(19) María está enferma. Lo está. (neuter)
'Mary is sick. She is (it).'

(20) Compré un coche. Lo compré. (masculine)
'I bought a car. I bought it.'

where the underlined words are co-referential.

Among the eleven clitic pronouns there are two different subsets: (a) me-te-se, nos-os-se, singular and plural respectively, and (b) le-la-lo (singular), les-las-los (plural). The two subsets share some syntactic properties: they are always unstressed phonetically, they follow or precede the verb under the same constraints, and they follow the same clitic promotion rules.

On the other hand, the two subsets exhibit their own peculiar syntactic properties. Only group (a) can refer to the subject of the sentence; it is the function we call reflexive. Group (b) never refers to the subject of the sentence, in other words they are non-reflexive. At the same time group (b) shows Dative/Accusative contrast, fully in Latin American Spanish, and partially in peninsular Spanish. Furthermore, le-la-lo show gender contrast (masculine/feminine/neuter). This gender opposition is full in colloquial Castilian, and partial in all other dialects.

Subset (b) shows a morphological shape which is almost identical to that of the definite articles: el-la-lo, las-los, and whose function is basically that of referent differentiator with the gender morpheme just like any other noun modifier in Spanish. Another important difference between subsets (a) and (b) is that we may have two of the first group in immediate sequence, whereas no two elements of subset (b) can be used consecutively, in spite of the semantic compatibility of the roles played by the underlying NP's generating the clitic pronouns. There is no le-lo, les-lo, etc. sequences, while from subset (a) two (and even three sometimes) can be used in sequences such as te-me, se-me, te-nos, etc.

This last point has puzzled many grammarians and linguists. The so-called "spurious-se" rule seems very simple: le-les becomes se whenever it is followed by an Accusative clitic such as lo-los in Latin American Spanish, le-les, lo-los or la-las in peninsular Spanish, and le-les, la-las, lo in colloquial Castilian. A few examples will illustrate this point:

(21) a. Di la carta a la chica. (Colloquial Castilian)
b. La di a la chica. (direct object pronominalization)
c. *La la di. (direct/indirect object pronominalization)
d. Se la di. (Spurious-se rule)
'I gave the letter to the girl.'

Some grammarians have explained the switching from le to se on phonological and morphological grounds, based on the phonetic similarity of the two words. Flora Klein (1971) explains thoroughly that the historical shift from old ge (pronounced [ʒe]) to se cannot be accounted for on phonetic grounds only. In spite of the apparent similarity between [š] and [s] (devoicing and alveolarization), and the widespread interchange between sibilants which took place from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries in Spanish, the shift from [ʒe] to [se] is not typical of sibilant replacements for two reasons: (a) it involves replacement of a palatal by an apical, and (b) the replacement of a voiced by a voiceless sound. The usual direction in the point of articulation is the other way: from apical to palatal, as in tijeras 'scissors', vejiga 'bladder', jugo 'juice', etc.

We may consider tentatively the replacent of le by se as a case of neutralization based on the principle of markedness:

(i) Le is marked (morphologically specified) for number and non-reflexivity in all dialects. In Latin American Spanish is also marked for case (Dative), in peninsular Spanish for either case (Dative) or animacy (persons), and in colloquial Castilian for gender (masculine).

(ii) Se is unmarked (unspecified) for case (Dative/Accusative contrast), gender (masculine/feminine/neuter), number (singular/plural) and reflexivity in all the Spanish dialects alike.

Morphologically se has no plural morpheme, whereas le has the plural form les. Based on the principle of markedness we may say that the "Spurious-se" rule is the neutralization of a marked element to an unmarked one. The syntactic similarities between the two clitics le and se were explained above when we considered subsets (a) and (b). Furthermore the two clitics replace third person NP's in deep structure. The features singular/plural, Dative/Accusative, masculine/feminine, reflexivity/non-reflexivity, are all neutralized in the clitic se. Therefore, ambiguity will result with the loss of those important features from the underlying structure to the surface:

(23) Se la regaló ayer. ' [it / he / she / you / ∅(one)] gave it to [it, itself / him, himself / her, herself / you, yourself / them] '

We left the subject unspecified intentionally to show all the reflexive possibilities besides the ordinary Dative combinations, and even the English gloss does not show all the possible different referents neutralized in the single word se, since them could be ellos and ellas, and you could be singular and plural. Obviously the general context or the universe of discourse will make a sentence like (23) comprehensible. The speaker can choose to clarify the case by using the stressed pronoun forms which are compatible with the clitic forms (unstressed) in the same sentence, for example,

(24) Se la dio a ellas ayer.
'He gave it to them yesterday.'

where se and ellas are co-referential.

Ambiguity seems to result whenever syntactic-semantic features are lost in the process of derivation through transformations, such as pronominalization, conjoining, deletion, etc. In the case of (23) above we see by the gloss in English that number, gender, person and reflexivity cannot be recovered from surface structure.

In summary, the controversial rule of the spurious-se is not an isolated fact in Spanish in spite of the idiosyncrasy of this constraint. It can be viewed as a case of neutralization based on the theory of markedness, and it can be compared with some other cases of neutralization in grammar, such as the gender neutralization of nouns and adjectives into the masculine form. The notion of markedness was developed to characterize the intrinsic content of features. For a given feature, the normal or expected value is the unmarked value, and its opposite — the less normal or less expected — the marked value. Since the set of grammatical features is universal, i.e. shared by all languages, it follows that the intrinsic content of features is also universal. Hence, if we have proved that the masculine gender is more natural than its feminine counterpart, that decision has been made for all languages. It is obvious, though, that the feature gender does not mean the same in all the languages as can be seen if we compare English and Spanish. The task of deciding which values are unmarked and which are marked has been characterized as a vast undertaking. Therefore, our conclusions in this paper cannot be decisive but tentative.

Notes

1. A few exceptions to this rule are la troca 'truck', la breca 'break', la yarda 'yard' la marqueta 'market'. Some other dialects use the masculine form: el troque, el breque, el yard, el market respectively.

2. The only counterexamples we can think of are a few nouns originated by the perfective participle form such as la salida 'exit', la entrada 'entrance', la tostada 'toast', etc.

3. A few counterexamples are bocacalle 'intersection', la sinrazón 'nonsense', la madreselva 'honey suckle'.

4. In addition to these apocopes we should mention ciento 'hundred' which always becomes cien, except in compound numbers; cualquiera becomes cualquier before a masculine or feminine noun, with the option to use the full word; grande becomes gran in front of a masculine or feminine noun.

5. Some of these nouns are not really augmentatives having the same meaning as the positive word with larger size. There seems to be a full change of semantic connotation in certain cases, for example, ratón 'mouse' is not a "large rat" (rata) but a different kind of animal within the same family; balón 'football' is not a "large bullet" (bala) but something different. This is part of the semantic changes in word derivation.

6. These statistics are based on a count of all the Spanish nouns in E. B. William's Spanish and English Dictionary (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1955).

7. In spite of the greater number of masculine final letters versus the feminine, the total number of masculine nouns in Spanish is approximately 19,500 and the feminine is about 17,300, which shows a small difference, due to the fact that many masculine final letters are not typically Spanish word ending sounds.

8. One counterexample is found in the adverbialization of adjectives where the feminine prevails over the masculine. For example, buenamente 'well' which shows the original agreement of the feminine mente 'mind' with the adjective buen-a 'good'.

9. Some counterexamples are tijeras 'scissors', alicates 'pliers', although the tendency in modern Spanish is to use the singular forms tijera, alicate. Compound words made of a verb and a noun are plural in form most of the time: examples, abrelatas 'can opener', tocadiscos 'record player'.

10. Historically, the accusative form Latin was supposed to merge into lo and the dative into le in Spanish. And yet we find the form le for the accusative replacing masculine personal nouns in the early writings, such as Poema del Cid (eleventh century), Libro de Buen Amor (fourteenth century), etc.

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